1: Ammar E, I-5 (1951) 1954
MR13 Fellahin MR13
Silwa

Preface

THE VILLAGE SETTING

SILWA, the village community chosen for this study, is an Egyptian village in the province of Aswan, the southern border province in Upper Egypt.[1] It lies at a distance of about 850 kilometres from Cairo and approximately 80 kilometres to the north of the town of Aswan itself. With a population of nearly 3,500, Silwa is an administrative headquarters with a Police Centre responsible for ten villages, five of which, including Silwa itself, are officially referred to as Northern Silwa (Silwa Bahari), while the other five are called Southern Silwa (Silwa Kibli).

The total area of this administrative unit covers more than 17 square kilometres along the eastern bank of the Nile, with a total population of more than 11,000. The density of population in these villages is about 700 persons per square kilometre, whereas it is slightly less than 600 for the whole country.[2] The sex distribution in the village of Northern Silwa, according to the official statistics of 1947, shows almost even number of males and females, a distribution which is similar to that in the whole country. The table overleaf shows the relation between age distribution in Silwa Bahari and that of the whole country.

Significant in the table is the fact that the figures in Silwa follow pretty closely the national figures, and that slightly less than 40 per cent of the total population both in Silwa and in the country as a whole are less than 14 years old, a population trend characteristic of peasant societies.[3] It cannot be ascertained how the malaria epidemic which spread in Silwa and in all parts of the province of Aswan between 1942 and 1945 has affected the percentages of age distribution in Silwa and might partly account for the slight discrepancies shown in the table.

[1] At present Egypt is divided into sixteen administrative provinces.

[2] *Census of Population of the Kingdom of Egypt for 1947*, Vol. I, pamphlet 1—The Province of Aswan, Govt. Press, 1951 (Arabic). The General Census for the whole country from 1947 had not been published during the writer's stay in Egypt (1951) and he had to work out figures for the whole country from the previous General Census of 1937, taking into account the increase of population from 17,000,000 in 1937 to 19,000,000 in 1947.

[3] Oscar Lewis, *Life in a Mexican Village: Tepoztlan Restudied*, University of Illinois Press, 1951, p. 30.

1: Ammar E, I-5 (1951) 1954
MR13 Fellahin MR13
Silwa

THE VILLAGE SETTING

TABLE I

162 **Comparison of age-group distribution of Silwa Bahari and Egypt as a whole.**[1]

Age group	*Percentage of Total Population*	
	Silwa	*Egypt*
under 5	15·0	13·3
5–9	11·9	13·9
10–14	11·2	12·0
15–19	11·1	8·5
20–29	14·5	15·2
30–39	13·9	14·6
40–49	10·5	10·1
50–59	6·1	5·9
60 and over	5·7	6·3
unidentified ages	0·2	0·2

361 Like many other villages in Upper Egypt, Silwa lies at the foot of the Eastern Plateau. This physical setting divides the villagers' world in Silwa into three distinct parts: the 'hills', the villages, and the fields. The barren [823] 'hills', with their rugged dark rocks, though a source of fear and apprehen- [241] sion to the children, are not so inhospitable for the adults who rely on the [134] salty clay (nitrous soil) found in these hills for use as land fertilizer. The [345] village itself is composed of compact houses built of sandstone, which is available in the environment. There is hardly any planning in the village scheme, except for three main streets cutting across the village from east 363 to west and another main street leading from north to south; the first three forming the main routes from the village to the fields. The rest of the by-ways between the houses are narrow and twisted and are occasionally interrupted by heaps of stones and rubble. After 1936, owing to the increase 362 of village population, a new space between the old village and the railway line was allotted free by the government for building purposes. Most of this space has been built upon and inhabited mainly by those married sons whose parental homes have not sufficient room for their accommodation. 361 However, the finest buildings in the village are the two mosques. With [346] whitewashed walls, elegant and dignified minarets, and a floor covered with mats, these mosques represent one of the most cohesive forces in the [182] life of the villagers—religion.

[1] Here the percentages in Silwa are worked out from the figures given for 1947, but those of Egypt from the figures of 1937. Thus one could assume that the percentages of age groups have not radically changed. On the other hand, there are no details about age groups in Silwa in the 1937 Census.

LIVELIHOOD IN SILWA

the winter crop or summer crop respectively. The villagers depend mainly on a kind of clay (nitrous soil) brought from the eastern cliffs as fertilizer, called 'marog'. On camel- or donkey-back it is brought to the fields after a journey of approximately six miles which takes about four hours there and back. The saline properties of 'marog' are recognized by colour and taste. In addition, pigeon and chicken droppings, soil impregnated with stable-dung, and oven-ashes are also used to supplement the 'marog'. Chemical fertilizers are used by only very few people who have neither animals nor children to bring the 'marog', or by those who have so much land for which they could not possibly collect all the required 'marog', and hence have to supplement it by chemical fertilizer. Chemical fertilizer is usually preferred to nitrous clay for the cultivation of cash crops, sugar-cane and cotton, the area of which does not exceed thirty acres for the whole village.

With the help of my informant, Ali, I have tried to calculate the amount of time needed for the entire process of cultivation of both the winter and summer crops. It is obvious that such a task is a somewhat complicated one. However, we took the feddan as the functional unit of measurement and had to assume certain criteria for the labour in the farm unit. We had to answer questions such as: How many hours does a farmer work in the field in a day or during different periods of work? To what extent is the difference in output affected by physical conditions? What tools, implements and animals do we assume to be owned by the farmer for our calculations? How many children are assumed to be working on the farm, and what age groups are represented? However, we agreed to take a family, composed of a father, having two children, aged eight and thirteen, owning a camel, and working on an acre as the basis of our calculations. This unit was not entirely arbitrary, as the average size of the family unit is between five and six persons. To include two boys in such a family is not beyond the law of probability. The age represents one child under compulsory schooling, helping his father in the afternoon, while the other boy has just left school on reaching adolescence, when he can be relied upon to bring the fertilizer from the hill. The camel has been chosen as the median unit for the animal contribution to the farm work. It is true that not every farmer owns a camel, but alternatively he might well have a donkey to bring fertilizer and a cow for ploughing. In this case, he could lend his cow for ploughing to a farmer having a camel, and ask him in return for his camel to help him bringing extra fertilizer. One farmer may possess a plough and a donkey, and thus he can get extra help in conveying fertilizer by lending his plough. If a farmer has a third boy he could send him to help in working with another farmer in return for some needed help. However, every farmer possesses a donkey or a camel for loading as a necessary productive agent in agriculture. Thus the writer feels that the unit chosen is a feasible productive unit, representing the average working conditions.

1: Ammar E, 1-5 (1951) 1954
MR13 Fellahin MR13
Silwa

Chapter Two

THE SOCIAL ORGANIZATION OF THE COMMUNITY

SOCIAL GROUPINGS

By 'social organization' here is meant the relations between social groups which have a certain ordered arrangement in the community. This is usually called by most anthropologists 'social structure'. We shall deal not only with the expected or ideal pattern of relations between the groups or the individuals, but also with their realization in concrete social behaviour. As Malinowski has emphasized, one must not only consider the 'charter' of the institutions and their traditional norms governing human conduct; it is equally important to study the real activities which may differ from the prescribed expectations owing to specific social pressure.[1] Moreover, 'social organization' will also include the 'social controls' that maintain 'law and order in the community' as well as the religious and magical sanctions which serve to validate social action.

In Silwa, the family is the basic social unit around which the individual's life is centred. According to the official statistics, there are 1,223 families in Silwa Bahari, with an average of four persons to each family. In Arabic, the word family (aila) literally means the social unit that supports its members. In Silwa, the words for family and household (bait) are sometimes interchangeably used. Ideally, the minimum personnel of the family comprises parents, unmarried children and married sons with their wives. There are, however, many other variations on this pattern, e.g. a conjugal family with a son-in-law, with the husband's sister who is a widow, with the husband's paternal nephew or niece who is an orphan, or with a paternal cousin. One can safely say that the composition of the members of a household constituting a family is mainly determined by the patrilineal principle, an emphasis which lies at the root of the family in Silwa. The position of such a family depends on property and ownership of land, as it is the main factor that makes the family live in one household. A widowed sister lives with her married brother if she transfers to him her property of land or at least allows him to till it. As married boys can have no property

[1] B. Malinowski, *A Scientific Theory of Culture*, pp. 52–3.

1: Ammar E, I-5 (1951) 1954
MR13 Fellahin MR13
Silwa

where. In default of compliance or in the case of the continued absence of the child, its parents or guardian are to be notified, and are liable to fine or imprisonment.

These were the main laws governing the compulsory school in Egypt until 1948, and the village school was on a half-day basis up to that year, boys attending school in the morning, followed by the girls in the afternoon.[1] There are usually four classes in the school building and three other rooms, one for the staff and two for stores. The number of school-children during the year 1950–51 was 138 in the four classes. According to the official records the numbers of children of the compulsory school age for the last seven years were:

TABLE VI

Children of the compulsory school age in Silwa (1944–51)

Year	*Total*	*Boys*	*Girls*
1944	154	77	87
1945	98	50	48
1946	98	45	53
1947	97	48	49
1948	131	60	71
1949	47	26	21
1950	61	38	23
1951	77	51	26[2]

The school, however, has only places for 150 children of all ages, and thus there is scope for some parents to compete for appeal either to the Omda or the headmaster at the beginning of the year to exempt their children from schooling or to withdraw them on grounds of lack of space.

As to the staff, the school has between three and four teachers; two of them at present are from the village itself, and the teachers are either the products of al-Azhar, the theological University, or the Elementary Training College (four to five years' course). The main requirement for entrance to the latter at the age of fourteen is the memorization of half

[1] It is indicative of the male-female ethos that boys should attend school first, and even at present when the school is full, and the classes are mixed, the boys sit in the front, with the girls at the back of the class. This reflects the different sex norm guiding the behaviour of the villagers in comparison with mixed education in the modern Egyptian Universities where, for instance, girl students sit in the front and the male students sit behind them, yet there is no real mixing in the lecture rooms. The front rows are normally reserved for girls, and the general tendency is for the girls to keep to these rows.

[2] The number of children eligible for compulsory school in 1949, 1950 and 1951 is comparatively low because of the very high death rate amongst both children and adults between 1941 and 1943 as a result of the malaria epidemic.

2: Blackman E-5 (1920-1926) 1927
MR13 Fellahin MR13
Upper Egypt

peacemaker arrives in time a serious disturbance can usually be avoided.

The accounts given in subsequent chapters of blood-feuds, inter-village fights, and other crimes of violence should not, however, cause the reader to pass too harsh a judgment on the Egyptian peasants if he will but bear in mind that the violent contrasts in the physical features of the country are reflected in the psychology of the inhabitants collectively and individually.

The *felläḥīn* form the bulk of the population of Egypt, and the

FIG. 4. A VILLAGE ON THE BANKS OF THE BAḤR EL-YŪSUF

larger number of them are Muslims. The Copts, who at one time were far more numerous than they are at the present day, are scattered about all over the country, though in a few towns and villages they may form the greater part of the population. The word 'Copt,' it must be borne in mind, does not denote a racial, but rather a religious, distinction.

The Beduins (Arabic *Bedu*, singular *Bedawī*), many of whom still lead a more or less nomadic desert life, and the Arabs, who have settled down as cultivators of the soil, also form a not inconsiderable portion of the population. Their facial features and certain styles of dress distinguish them from the native inhabitants. Nubians, Sudan negroes, Turks, Greeks, Syrians, and Jews are also to be found in large numbers, the four latter peoples chiefly in Lower Egypt, though they do not altogether confine themselves

(the Fayûm) near Beni-Suef, flowers at Cairo, and spreads out into a great head of blossom on the Rosetta and Damietta branches, till it touches the Mediterranean across a fringe of lakes — Mariut, Edku, Borollos and Manzala — stretching from West to East across the mouths of the river. 133

Closed in by its two deserts, far across which lie the political frontiers, the Nile Valley is of an essentially agricultural nature. Its life has but one colour, the green of perpetual crops. They spread over a vast, unvarying countryside, sprinkled here and there with towns and villages. 133 137

A man standing in a maize field at harvest time can see neither the Nile, nor the vast network of canals and drains, nor the low clusters of houses, and is able to trace the railway line only by the telegraph poles. As on the well-watered plains of Holland and Russia — though under a rainless sky — the fields and crops are all in all. 133 241

A traveller in the Valley of the Nile cannot fail to be impressed by the agricultural nature of the whole countryside. Whether he goes north from Cairo to Alexandria, or south towards Khartoum, whether he travels by rail, road or river, in the Delta or in the Sa'id, in summer or in winter, his impression will be the same. But once he leaves the Nile on the way to Suez, or to the Coptic monasteries of Wadi-Natroun, the desert engulfs him on every side. He seems in a different country. On the West he will find the oases of Kharga, Dakhla, Farafra and Siwa, with their Bedouin and their bazaars. On the East, towards the Red Sea coast, he will meet with oil-wells and phosphate mines, and the families of Upper Egyptian fellaheen who have gone to work there. In this strange, denuded Egypt, which is neither Upper nor Lower Egypt, there are only these uprooted exiles to remind the traveller of the familiar countryside which for him, as for nine tenths of the Egyptians themselves, is the land of Egypt. [166 464]

2.— Ethnology.

Neither the water nor the silt of the Nile, however, nor the burning rays of the sun could have created, or maintained until today, the agricultural land of Egypt, without the aid of a population itself fundamentally agricultural. 162 241

3: Ayrout M-5 (ca. 1935) 1945
MR13 Fellahin MR13
Egypt MR1

F
162 Here is a clear instance of correspondence between
241 human concentration and physical productivity. Here, more than anywhere else, irrigation and population are co-extensive.

E The number of inhabitants must have varied in the course
F of earlier ages, but definite figures will never be known.
161 However, prehistoric discoveries give early indications of
175 density (9). In the Pharaonic period the population probably fluctuated between seven millions, the figure given by Diodorus Siculus(10), and ten millions. The writers of Christian Egypt speak of twenty millions. At the time of the French expedition, after centuries of Arab and Turkish rule, the figure fell to some two and a half millions. Jomard, basing his estimate on the number of villages and the level of production, thinks such a figure quite normal.

Later statistics were to show, however, that it was remarkably low. An equilibrium which had been destroyed by factors other than those of geography — massacres, plague and famine (11)—was not long in re-establishing itself. As Vidal de la Blache justly remarks about Egypt, 'ancient civilisations derive a remarkable elasticity from the fact that they are based on what changes least, the productive
E and recuperative quality of the soil.'
F In point of fact, once order and public security were
161 re-established, the progressive introduction of perennial
311 irrigation and of exportable crops, by developing the possibilities of the land, necessitated a constantly growing labour force and brought about an increase of population.

E The first detailed census, in 1873, showed 5,250,000
F inhabitants. Half a century later, in 1927, the number had
161 risen to 14,217,864. In 1937 it stood at 15,904,525. This
162 population remains closely packed on the black soil upon which it depends. Ninety-three per cent. of the Egyptians, that is to say more than fifteen million souls, dwell in the basin of the Nile, which represents only a thirtieth of the whole territory. In this narrow area the towns, overcrowded and few in number, contain scarcely more than three million inhabitants. The rest of the Egyptians are countryfolk, and almost all workers on the land, fellaheen. According to official records 62% of the men of the country work in the fields. Adding to these the women and children, who must everywhere be taken into account as active workers,

we shall probably be rather under- than overstating the case if we reckon the agricultural population, which is the subject of our enquiries, at twelve million souls.

Moreover, this population is increasing. Less rapidly, it is true, than that of Cairo, where between 1917 and 1927 the increase was 28%, while in the country it scarcely exceeded 10%. But in the city the rise is largely due to an influx from abroad and from the countryside; in the country it is dependent on the birthrate alone.

Thus the rural density of population is about 1300 persons to the square mile (1). Such a situation is probably without parallel except in Tonkin, where six million peasants live on 5150 square miles, giving a density of 1165, or 93% of the population on 16% of the territory. Of this mass three millions live at a density of 1400, and more than one and a half millions at 2800 (2).

The density of population in the Nile Valley is explained by the concurrence of all the conditions, geographic, economic and social, which favour a high birthrate. The climate is warm, the valley itself is flat, uniform, tractable and strictly defined. There are plentiful food crops which can provide locally for a numerous population; maize, corn, rice, lentils and beans grow throughout the country.

The cultivation of cotton necessitates a settled concentration of workers, whose labour may bring considerable profit. The perennial irrigation system on the one hand requires many labourers, and on the other hand, by raising the productivity of the soil, makes it possible for more people to live on it. The soil is divided into many small properties, either rented or privately owned. These small holdings only accentuate the overcrowding which causes them. Help is wanted as cheap as possible; children can provide it. Thus the fellah is forced by the exigencies of the land to have children, and as many as possible. This for him is the meaning of marriage and the family. Where all these conditions exist together, as in the province of Menoufiya in the Upper Delta, where the land has been longest cultivated and irrigated, where cotton is the chief crop and small holdings are the most numerous, a density of over 2,000 to the square mile is to be found (3).

Where favourable conditions are fewer the density grows less. This is so in the South, in the districts above

162 and below the cataract of Aswan, where the land is less rich
134 and is still under the system of basin irrigation and large, semi-feudal estates. In the province of Aswan there are only 305,195 inhabitants to 224,000 feddans. This gives about 800 to the square mile. But the lowest rural density occurs in the lake region of the North, where the lands are low-lying, salt and marshy. Near Kafr-el-Dawĕr, not far from Alexandria, it is only about 500 to the square mile.

311 This uneven distribution, though it may be explained
162 by physical conditions, is not finally determined by them. In the outlying districts which we have just mentioned the full capacity of the land is far from being reached.

181 There is still another factor of prime importance to
166 be considered — habit. Time as well as place has its influence
464 on human psychology. The fellah has a stable, unadventurous disposition. He stays tied to his native village, which represents for him the security of both past and present. Unlike the Palestinian or Syrian peasant, he never emigrates to try his luck. He will never even take a job in another province where there is a demand for labour, unless he is pressed into it by force. If he does leave his native *balad*, it will not be for another country district, which could never be as good as his own, or afford him a better life or income; he will make for the town, and by preference for Cairo. So migration is comparatively rare, and owners of newly reclaimed land (*bardri*) find great difficulty in securing sufficient hands, despite the good pay and housing they offer.

Rural, gregarious, stay-at-home; such is the Egyptian people in its dominant characteristics. These qualities have contributed as much as the needs and possibilities of the soil to cause the over-population of the country.

162 Over-population, however, is a relative term, and there are a number of factors to be taken into account.

312 The adoption of perennial irrigation has made possible
241 a more intensive exploitation of the most fertile land. Thus the area actually cultivated remained more or less stable between 1930 and 1940 at an average of 5,353,500 feddans; however, since much of this land produced two crops in the course of a year, the crop area, as it is called, rose to close on eight and a half million feddans.

At the same time the use of chemical fertilisers and the improvement of the drainage system raised the average yield per feddan. Between 1932 and 1939 the yield of all crops showed a distinct tendency to rise, only to fall again sharply in 1941, after imports of fertilisers had been drastically cut down.

Again, although the area actually cultivated averaged only 5,353,500 feddans between 1930 and 1940, there are in all 7,100,000 feddans which are classed as cultivable. The surplus of 1,750,000 feddans consists largely, no doubt, of inferior land, but if energetic measures were taken a great deal of it could be worked economically. Even should the limit be reached there still remains the Sudan. This vast and under-populated country is really an extension of Upper Egypt, which it resembles.

If present trends continue, however, these favourable factors are likely soon to be neutralised by the constant increase of the fellah population. Although the birthrate shows a tendency to fall, the gross rate of increase rose from an average of 168,000 a year between 1927 and 1937 to about 250,000 a year between 1937 and 1941.

Year	Population	Increase	Percentage Increase	Mean Annual Percentage Increase
1897	9,714,525	2,910,504	—	—
1907	11,287,359	1,572,834	16,2	1,62
1917	12,750,918	1,463,559	13,0	1,3
1927	14,217,864	1,466,946	11,5	1,25
1937	15.932,694	1,714,830	12,1	1,21

It is clear that sooner or later, if the present standard of living of the fellaheen is to be maintained, let alone raised, the problem of over-population will become acute. The palliatives we have mentioned will not suffice for long. More drastic measures will have to be taken: on the one hand the industrialisation of the country, to create a better balance between industry and agriculture and to raise the general level of production; and on the other hand a policy of reallotment of land, permitting more intensive cultivation by smallholders, and better distribution of the products. The consideration of such remedies, however, lies beyond the scope of this book.

585 The bridegroom too has made himself ready. He
[515] has had a bath in his best friend's house. His best clothes have been brought, and the *mizayen* has come to groom him and put henna on his hands. Outside a crowd of people are waiting for him to come out. At last he is ready. His men friends ring him round with candles, and a torchlight procession begins. He holds a white handkerchief over his face as if to mask himself, as they strike up songs of love and pleasure (*mawâwîl*), which mingle with the sound of shots. Meanwhile the women throw pinches of salt over the men. When the family house is reached, the bridegroom's friends snatch him from the crowd and drag him in. The young bride is already waiting, surrounded by the women who have tested her virginity, and the marriage is consummated without much secrecy. In the street outside, amidst the cries of the crowd, singing and dancing goes on all night and all the next day. Coloured sweets and treacly pastries are
[262] handed round. On this day there is no thought of economy. After his marriage the young man spends a week or a fortnight without going to work, and during this time he is called "Prince" (*amîr*).

592 The household is thus begun, but for several years more
606 the couple will be dependent on the husband's family. If
554 the wife is clever, obeys her mother-in-law, and bears her
595 husband many male children, he will not take another wife. The same will happen if he is poor, and cannot afford the expenses of another wedding.

595 It is perfectly legal for a Moslem to have four wives, or
586 to divorce. But the fellah makes little use of this Koranic
178 liberty. In the last ten years a considerable decline has been noted in polygamy and divorce. The reason, according to a provincial official, is not so much the progress of civilisation as the increasing poverty of the fellaheen. Lower Egypt being richer, more bigamous marriages are recorded there than in Upper Egypt.

586 Divorce is carried out merely by repeating three times the words of repudiation (*talaq*). Nothing could be easier, but as he is obliged to pay maintenance to the divorced wife, and a new dowry to the one who takes her place, the fellah usually keeps to one wife. Other details also enter
162 into the matter. Statistics show that the country population
585 comprises almost as many men as women. For the whole

of Egypt in 1937 there were 7,947,193 men to 7,957,332 women. As nearly everyone marries, the inference is obvious. It may be, too, that Moslem customs have been counteracted to some extent by natural law and by Christian influence as represented in the Coptic family. In any case, years of work and suffering together, children, and a wife's good care create an almost unbreakable bond.

The temperament of the fellaheen, especially of the women, is very ardent and sensual. Marriage is to them less an affair of love than one of sexual attraction and reproduction.

The fellah's wife usually enjoys better health than her husband, who is weakened by bilharzia. She is younger, and despite Islam has had considerable freedom in her own affairs since the most ancient times. Village tradition requires on pain of death that she should be physically a virgin when she marries, but mentally she has ceased to be so long before. Since childhood she has been aware of her parents' intercourse, which is quite open owing to lack either of privacy or of modesty. The conversation of the women, even before young girls, turns often on these subjects, not perhaps viciously, but certainly without restraint. They tell each other of the charms and stratagems with which to please and hold their menfolk.

The men, who are more reserved and by their way of life utterly materialistic, understand only sexual love. They revel in it, each with his own wife, and are kept faithful less by virtue than by village law. Adultery leads immediately to bloodshed, and prostitutes are beyond their means.

The heat of passion is short-lived. At thirty a fellah woman is no longer attractive, but the children she has borne her husband bind him to her. Both want children above everything else. To the wife they mean social prestige, for barrenness is a disgrace and the chief cause of polygamy and divorce (**). To the father they represent helpers and successors, who will allow him to rest and give orders. Accordingly families are large. The average number of children is five, and this presupposes eight to ten births. The older they grow the more important does the mother become.

Another thing that binds the man to his wife is her wisdom and authority, which are often greater than his. A fellah proverb has it that 'Man is a river, woman a dyke'.

The first and most urgent need, let it be said again, is education. /183

"It is my opinion that every reform which is not founded on the education of the people is destined to fail, or at least to take a very long time—and the people's time is precious. /185 /203

"Nothing will ever come of building model villages, or of using the cinema and the wireless to give advice on health and social matters, unless the people are educated and enabled to make use of all these things." (Article in Al-Mussawar No. 800 by 'Abdel-Qader Hamza Pasha, Senator, 1940.)

Many influential people, however, sincerely believe that to educate the fellah would be to make him unhappy, and that his present state of insensibility and habituation is best for him. He does not suffer so much as one might think, for he does not know what he lacks. To teach him would mean to waken in him demands for comfort and amusement which he could not satisfy, and which would give him a distaste for work on the land. Then what would become of Egypt ? In 1933 a Member of Parliament maintained that the education of the masses was undesirable, and suicidal for Egypt. Many large landowners think the same. /183 /185 /871

This may well be so, if by education is meant the wholly unsuitable programme to be found in the official syllabus of compulsory education. There is no sense in teaching the fellah practices which are useless in the country-side, and are based on purely Western ideas. "This teaching does not give results in proportion to its cost. The Commission therefore advises a radical reorganisation based on a recognition of the need to prepare the young for country life, so as to raise the standard of agricultural production" (''). As for the fellah's distaste for the farm's driving him to the city, this movement comes more from continual poverty than from such teaching. The fellah migrates to the town only because he hopes to earn enough there to enable him to return to the land. /166

It must be said that no depopulation of the countryside has yet been noted. The 1937 census shows a stationary figure for the rural population, in spite of the increased birth rate and the relative decrease of mortality. On the other hand, in the less illiterate villages, and among fellaheen who have returned after a long stay in the city — poorer /162 /166 /184

F 184 or richer, but at least with their eyes opened — a certain distaste is noticeable for the hard toil of the fields.

E F 162 166 In 1937 there were in Cairo 188,000 persons of Upper Egyptian origin, and 200,000 from the provinces of Lower Egypt, an increase of over 150,000 in ten years. The *mudiriya* of Assiut had lost 50,000 to the capital, and Menufiya, the most thickly populated province, more than 70,000. These figures are an indication not so much of the spread of education, as of poverty and overcrowding.

E 186 166 A glance at the fellah colonies established in Cairo shows that they form veritable villages, grouped according to their place of origin in odd quarters of the capital such as Sharabiya or Kolâly. They keep to themselves, meet at special cafés, and cling to their country customs as long as possible. Generally it is the men that have migrated, leaving their wives and children in the villages; which proves that they hope to return. They find work most often as building labourers, taken on for the day by a *rayess* ; they are better paid than in the fields (about P.T. 5 a day, pre-war rate), but just as badly treated, and always in danger of unemployment.

E 166 464 511 557 After a few years' experience some come back to their native places poorer than ever, or perhaps well enough off to buy the plot of land they dreamed of. Others settle in the city and work as navvies, porters, servants, or hawkers, fastening like flies on to the wealth of the city, just as the hovels they live in cling to the edges of the better quarters. They form a parasitic growth which never becomes part of the city. Some few manage to worm their way in, and develop into big merchants, contractors, or brokers; but they are not in the least interested in improving the quarter from which they came. They trample on their old associates instead of helping them to rise.

The distress of the fellah remains.

5. T.—Iron ore of excellent quality and in great abundance has recently been discovered in the Western Desert near Aswan; the projected electrification of the Aswan Dam would provide power for smelting it on the spot. The author's original text, which excluded the possibility of far-reaching industrialisation, has accordingly been modified. [113] [135]

6. P. Bovier Lapierre : L'Egypte Préhistorique in Précis d'Histoire d'Egypte, Vol. I, pp. 9-14.

7. Mosséri and Audebeau : The Function of Cracks in the Soil in the Drying and Permanent Purification of the Land in Egypt, in Bulletin de l'Institut d'Egypte, Vol. V (1922-3), pp. 9-19.
A. Demanféon ; Problèmes Actuels et Aspects Nouveaux de la Vie Rurale en Egypte, in Annales de Géographie, Paris, March 1926, pp. 155-173.

8. 'The word sa'id signifies a raised area of land. The same word also means the surface of the soil, good earth, any good area of land. It was applied by the Arabs in the time of Islam to the southern part of Egypt, because this part is raised above the rest of Egypt. The sa'id is also known by the name of the Southern Region.' Maqrîzi : Topographical and Historical Description of Egypt (14th Century). [133] [134] [103]

9. De Morgan : Recherches sur les Origines de l'Egypte, Vol. I, p. 67.

10. A. Moret : The Nile and Egyptian Civilisation, p. 468. 'On the numbers of the population in Pharaonic times the monuments tell us nothing definite. By analogy with modern times one may reckon that Egypt, properly so called, was able to feed eight million inhabitants under the Theban Monarchy.' [161]
Prince Omar Toussoun, in his Mémoires sur les Finances de l'Égypte depuis les Pharaons jusqu'à nos jours, reckons the number at eighteen millions.

11. 'Suffice it to say that a village which once contained 10,000 souls seemed to the passer-by nothing but a rubbish-heap ; sometimes a few solitary people were to [162]

113 be found there, sometimes not a single inhabitant." 162 THE STORY OF EGYPT, by 'Abd-el-Latif, a 14th-century Arab doctor of Baghdad.

12. In England in 1941, for example, the agricultural population numbered only four million. Since 1900 alone, a quarter of a million persons have left agriculture.

113 13. Figures given by M. Gourou, in his PAYSANS DU DELTA TONKINOIS, Paris, 1936.

14. Out of the 283,232 persons owning land in this province 216,861 own less than a feddan apiece. The average is two fifths of a feddan. [423]

[453 426] 15. A French banking-company founded in 1880 for advances against land. The CRÉDIT AGRICOLE is a newer Government foundation for similar purposes.

16. THE CADASTRAL SURVEY OF EGYPT, 1891-1907, by Capt. H.G. Lyons, Ministry of Finance, Cairo, 1908.

17. The word WAKF comes from an Arabic root meaning to stop, or be at a standstill. The nearest English word is probably trust, or entail.

[423] 18. The result of this disproportionate increase is that the average held by each small owner has grown less. In 1897 owners of less than five feddans held an average of 1.58 feddans. Today the average is 1.82 feddans a head, which is ridiculously small. So the development of rural property in Egypt has affected small holdings only, increasing their number while lessening their average area, whereas large and medium-sized estates have remained almost unchanged, and continue to cover vast areas. See LES GRANDES LIGNES DE L'ECONOMIE AGRICOLE DE L'EGYPTE, by J. Anhoury, Government Press, Cairo, 1941, p. 64.

19. P. Jouguet, L'EGYPTE AU IIIe SIÈCLE, in PRÉCIS D'HISTOIRE D'EGYPTE, Vol. I, p. 393.

20. LE LABOURAGE EN EGYPTE, in BULLETIN DE L'INSTITUT D'EGYPTE, Cairo, 1916, pp. 83-127.

3: Ayrout M-5 (ca. 1935) 1945
MR13 Fellahin MR13
Egypt MR1

59. In 1934, of the 30,784 Moslem women who were married 15,248 were spinsters, 13,837 divorcees and 1,709 widows. 12,688 of the total number were below the age of 20. In 1941 the *mudiriya* of Minia had the fewest divorces, 3.9 a thousand, while in Cairo and Suez the proportion was 12.8 a thousand.

60. In 1934, out of 3,278 divorces 2,396 were dissolved childless marriages.

61. *T.*—The following table shows the actual achievement, which though considerable is much less than the declared aim. The number of school-children in all kinds of schools is shown as a percentage of the number of children between the ages of 5 and 14.

Year	Children between 5 and 14	Children on school registers (*)	Percentage
1927	3,439,269	770,000	22.9
1931	3,700,000	891,682	24.1
1934	3,905,000	941,760	24.1
1937	4,117,941	1,309,000	31.8
1940	4,335,000	1,563,590	36.1

* estimated figures.

Since 1940, war conditions have made the building of new schools impossible, and Negib el-Hilali Pasha, in his REPORT ON EDUCATIONAL REFORM (Cairo, Dec. 1943), admitted that the elementary system was, as a whole, a failure, and that new directives were necessary. The problem is to evolve a genuinely rural school in the village.

62. Selim Hassan : SURVIVALS OF ANCIENT EGYPTIAN CUSTOMS IN MODERN EGYPT (in Arabic) in the BULLETIN OF THE SOCIETY OF THE FRIENDS OF COPTIC ART, Vol. II, 1936, pp. 47-71.

63. *T.*—About the middle of August, when the Nile has reached its highest, the dam of the now filled-in canal at Fumm el-Khalig in Cairo was formerly cut with great ceremony, and a doll (in antiquity an alive woman) was thrown into the rushing floods. (These Festivities are still held, culminating in a firework display attended by the Governor and notables, and the day is a public holiday.)